

State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

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February 25, 2004

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
9:00 p.m., March 24, 2004
Regional Water Quality Control Board
Hearing Room
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: Introduction of the 2004 Triennial Review of the *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this item is to introduce the 2004 Triennial Review of the *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region* (Basin Plan), describe the Triennial Review process, and provide a schedule for completing the review.

THE TRIENNIAL REVIEW PROCESS

Section 13250 of Porter-Cologne and Section 303 (c)(1) of the Federal Clean Water Act require a review of basin plans at least once each three-year period to keep pace with changes in regulation, new technologies, policies, and physical changes within the region. The Regional Water Board is responsible for this review, and is required to: 1) identify those portions of the Basin Plan which are in need of modification or new additions; 2) adopt standards as appropriate; and; 3) recognize those portions of the Basin Plan which are appropriate as written. The review includes public hearings to identify issues of water quality concern, which may be remedied by revision of the Basin Plan. After public input is received, the Regional Water Board's role in the Triennial Review process is to evaluate if revisions to water quality standards are needed.

At the conclusion of the Triennial Review, the Regional Water Board will adopt a resolution which: 1) summarizes those sections of the Basin Plan which the Regional Water Board has determined to be appropriate and accurate; and; 2) sets forth a prioritized list of potential revisions to the Basin Plan. A copy of the priority list from the 2001 Triennial Review is attached.

HISTORY OF BASIN PLAN AMENDMENTS

Water quality control plans (Basin Plans) provide the basis for protecting water quality in California. Basin Plans are mandated by both the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act (Porter-Cologne). Sections 13240-13247 of Porter-Cologne specify that the regional basin plans shall include the following:

- Water quality objectives which, in the judgment of the Regional Water Board, will ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses and the prevention of nuisance.
- The program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives, including a description of the nature of actions which are necessary to achieve the objectives, time schedules for the actions to be taken, and a description of surveillance to be undertaken to determine compliance with objectives.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) adopted its first interim basin plans in 1971. These were followed in 1975 by a comprehensive *Water Quality Control Plan for the Klamath River Basin (1A)* and a comprehensive *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coastal Basin (1B)*. In 1988, the Regional Water Board combined and updated the two comprehensive plans and their abstracts into a single *Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region*. In 1993, the Regional Water Board again updated descriptions and corrected inaccuracies in the Basin Plan. The Regional Water Board has amended the Basin Plan numerous other times between 1975 and 1996.

STATUS OF CURRENT REVIEW

During the 2001 Triennial Review, the Regional Water Board set a list of twenty-six priorities, including eleven high priorities. The first, the Beneficial Use Amendment, which the Regional Water Board approved in June 2003, is scheduled to be considered by the State Water Resources Control Board in April 2004. The second and third priority issues, the Regional Sediment Amendment and the Mendocino Watershed Action Plans, are currently underway and are tentatively scheduled to be brought to the Regional Water Board for consideration by January 2005. A portion of the fourth priority issue, Compliance Schedules, is to be considered by the Regional Water Board under separate item today.

TRIENNIAL REVIEW 2004 SCHEDULE

1. Regional Water Board staff will prepare a public report which describes the status of 2001 priority list issues and an assessment of the adequacies and inadequacies of the Basin Plan. This report is intended to serve as a starting point to identify new Basin Planning issues that may be remedied with Basin Plan amendments. This staff report will be prepared and available for public comment this summer.

2. The Regional Water Board will receive recommendations for changes to the Basin Plan from the public at duly noticed public workshops to be held in Eureka and in Santa Rosa. If a compelling reason is identified, a third workshop will be held in the Yreka area; however, due to budget constraints Regional Water Board staff is not planning a third workshop at this time.
3. Following the comment period, a second staff report will be available to the public. This report will summarize and respond to all input received by staff.
4. The Regional Water Board will be asked to consider adopting a resolution that identifies a Priority List of potential Basin Plan amendments at the adoption hearing in Santa Rosa on October 6, 2004.

The newly adopted Priority List will direct the planning efforts of the Regional Water Board and its staff for the next three-year period. As staffing and budget allow the Regional Water Board will consider each of the potential Basin Plan revisions identified on the Priority List. A public hearing process, separate from the Triennial Review, will apply to each issue identified on the Priority List. This will allow the Regional Water Board to consider each potential basin plan amendment on its own merits.

PRELIMINARY STAFF

RECOMMENDATION: This is a written informational item. No formal Regional Water Board action is necessary at this time.